

REMARKS

Amendments

The specification and claims 68, 73, and 84 are amended. New claims 88 - 93 are added. Claims 1 - 67, 78 - 81, 86. And 87 are cancelled, without prejudice.

The specification is amended to add a reference 476 to an inner surface of reactor pressure vessel head 115, as shown in amended Figures 1, 3, and 5.

No new matter is added by the amendments. Support for the amendments is found in paragraphs [0002], [0020], [0033], [0053], and [0055], and elsewhere throughout the specification.

Drawings

At paragraph 2 of the detailed action the Examiner has objected to the drawings of the application under 37 CFR 1.83(a). Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner's attention to the Preliminary Amendment filed herein 23 April 2004 and marked as received by Group 3600 on 6 May 2004, wherein Applicants amended the specification and drawings to comply with 37 CFR 1.83(a). In particular, Applicants direct the Examiner to the amendment of paragraph [0042] and Figure 5 therein, whereby drawing reference 611 was added to Figure 5 and a suitable reference to paragraph [0042]. Applicant respectfully submits that the amended Figure 5 complies with 37 CFR 1.83(a).

For clarity in the rewritten claims, Applicant hereby amends Figures 1, 3 and 5 to add reference 476 to an inner surface of reactor pressure vessel head 115. As surface 476 would immediately be understood by one of ordinary skill in the relevant art to be an interior surface of the pressure vessel head 115, no new matter is added by the amendment.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

At paragraph 3 of the detailed action the Examiner has rejected claims 78 and 80 under 36 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement.

The Examiner stated that “There is neither an adequate description nor enabling disclosure as to what is all encompassed by the term/phrase “portion of the container” or “portion of the reactor pressure vessel head.” Applicants have hereby cancelled claims 78 and 80, and believe that they have thereby mooted the rejection.

At paragraph 4 the Examiner has rejected claims 68 - 85 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that the applicant regards as the invention. Applicants have hereby amended or cancelled the affected claims, and thereby mooted the rejection.

The cancelled claims are cancelled without prejudice, in the interest of expediting examination and allowance of the application, without admitting the propriety of any rejection, and with the express reservation to reinstate and seek allowance of all such claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §§ 102 and 103

At paragraphs 5 - 9 the Examiner has rejected claims 68, 69, 86 and 87 under U.S.C. 102 and 103 as being anticipated and/or rendered obvious by Wedellsborg (U.S. 4,767,593) Malandra et al. (U.S. 5,225,150), Griffiths et al. (U.S. 6,087,546), Aoki et al. (US 2002/0186806), alone or in various combinations.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment of claims 68, 69, 86, and 87 has mooted the grounds of objection. Each of the cited references fails to disclose or suggest, among other features, a bottom component adapted for attachment to a head-to-body joint flange of a nuclear reactor pressure vessel head and for containment of a portion of the pressure vessel head.

Applicants further submit that none of the cited references, taken singly or in any combination, renders the claimed invention obvious. For example, none of the cited references, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests containers or packages as claimed by Applicants for the decommissioning and storage of radioactive materials such as used reactor pressure vessel heads.

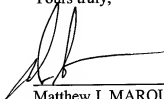
Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection, and allow the claims.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that they have fully responded to the Examiner's concerns and that the claims are now in condition for immediate allowance. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and immediate allowance of the claims.

Applicants further request that any questions be directed to the undersigned.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew J. Marquardt', is written over a horizontal line.

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